



VALLEY INVICTA  
ACADEMIES TRUST

# Complaints Policy

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## Key document details

Policy number:  
TG3

Policy type  
Trust

Colleague responsible:  
Chief Operating  
Officer

Date:  
January 2020

Next review:  
September 2022

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## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure fulfils the requirements of the Education Act 2002 (Section 29); it is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at any of our schools.

Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to the Valley Invicta Academies Trust (VIAT) schools listed below about any provision of facilities or services that are provided:

- Valley Invicta Primary School at Aylesford;
- Valley Invicta Primary School at East Borough;
- Valley Invicta Primary School at Holborough Lakes;
- Valley Invicta Primary School at Kings Hill;
- Valley Invicta Primary School at Leybourne Chase;
- Invicta Grammar School;
- School of Science and Technology Maidstone;
- The Lenham School;
- Valley Park School.

Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure to explain the process we follow.

### The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as:

*'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'<sup>1</sup>*

A complaint may be defined as:

*'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'<sup>1</sup>*

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaint's procedure. VIAT schools take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Head Teacher will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if that member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Head Teacher will refer you to an alternative staff member. This person may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand, however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, VIAT schools will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints' procedure.

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Education definition.

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### How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing, by telephone or email. Please mark correspondence as 'Private and Confidential'. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns or complaints should be raised with the Head Teacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complainants should not approach individual trustees or governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the Head Teacher) should be made, in the first instance, to the respective school Head Teacher via the school office in person, by telephone, in writing or via email. Please mark correspondence as 'Private and Confidential'.

Complaints that involve or are about the Head Teacher should be addressed to the corresponding Chair of the Local School Board, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of the Local School Board, any individual governor or the whole Local School Board, should be addressed to The Trust Governance Lead / Clerk via the school Office. Please mark all correspondence as 'Private and Confidential'.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints' procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

### Treatment of complaints from parents/carers of students with special educational needs concerning the provision made at the school

The normal procedures for the treatment of complaints at all VIAT schools are used for complaints about provision made for special educational needs. We encourage parents/carers to discuss their concerns, initially, with the relevant class/form teacher, SENCo or Headteacher to resolve the issue, before making the complaint formal, via the procedure outlined in this policy.

### Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Head Teacher or Chair of the Local School Board, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

### Time scales

You must raise the complaint within a reasonable time, no later than one month, of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within one month of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

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### Complaints received outside term time

We will consider complaints made outside term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

### Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by VIAT schools, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions to schools</li> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li> <li>• School re-organisation proposals</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Kent County Council</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our VIAT Safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – 030004 10888 or <a href="mailto:kentchildrenlado@kent.gov.uk">kentchildrenlado@kent.gov.uk</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the Trust complaints procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances</li> <li>• Staff conduct</li> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the VIAT grievance procedure.</p> <p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the VIAT disciplinary procedure, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p> <p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

procedure, or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against any of the VIAT schools in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded. Complaints about Trustees or Governors will only be handled by the Chair or Trust Governance Lead / Clerk, using either this procedure, or by referring to guidance set out in A Guide to the Law for School Governors. (Ch. 2 paras 26-32 Removal from Office; Ch. 2 paras 37-39 Qualifications and Disqualifications; Ch. 3 paras 51-53 Removal of the chair or vice-chair from office).

### Resolving complaints

At each stage of the procedure, VIAT schools will wish to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation of the decision;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been, or will be, taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint;
- an apology.

### Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing or via email.

### Informal Stage

Many concerns can be resolved by giving the complainant the opportunity to discuss matters with the individual concerned, whether a member of staff or the Head Teacher. The school expects that the vast majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage.

The conclusions of any meeting with the complainant will be put in writing and copied to the complainant within 10 school days following the meeting. If the informal process has been exhausted and no satisfactory solution found, the complainant should be advised in writing within 10 school days by the member of staff dealing with the issue that, if he/she wishes, the complaint can be considered formally.

The letter to the complainant will explain that they have 10 school days to request that their complaint is dealt with formally.

### Formal Procedure

#### Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the Head Teacher (unless they are about the Head Teacher), via the School Office in writing.

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The Head Teacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within ten school days.

Within this response, the Head Teacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Head Teacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Please be aware that the Head Teacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's Leadership group.

During the investigation, the Head Teacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Head Teacher will provide a formal written response within ten school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the Head Teacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the individual VIAT school will take to resolve the complaint.

The Head Teacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, or a member of the Local School Board (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled, independent governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about the Head Teacher or member of the Local School Board must be made to the Trust Governance Lead/ Clerk via the School Office, email address [clerk@viat.org.uk](mailto:clerk@viat.org.uk) or writing to:

Trust Governance Lead/ Clerk  
Valley Invicta Academies Trust  
Huntsman Lane  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME14 5DS

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or;
- the entire Local School Board or;
- the majority of the Local School Board or;

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- about the Trust.

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Trust. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

### Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Trust Governance Lead/ Clerk, via the School Office or via email, [clerk@viat.org.uk](mailto:clerk@viat.org.uk) or in writing to:

Trust Governance Lead/Clerk  
Valley Invicta Academies Trust  
Huntsman Lane  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME14 5DS

The Trust Governance Lead/Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within ten school days.

Requests received outside this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. The Trust Governance Lead/Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within ten school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, The Trust Governance Lead/Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, The Trust Governance Lead (Clerk) will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The Trust Governance Lead/Clerk will request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the panel at least ten school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least ten school days before the date of the meeting. The panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The complaints panel will consist of at least two Trustees and one independent person with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Panel. If there are fewer than two Trustees from the Trust Board available, The Trust Governance Lead/Clerk will source any additional independent governors from other VIAT Schools, in order to make up the panel. Alternatively, an entirely independent panel may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2. The Trust will ensure one member of the panel is independent of the management and running of the school, and who is a person of credibility from the local area. This could be a governor from a local school board from another school within the Trust, who has no conflict of interest or prior knowledge of the complaint.

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The panel will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the panel meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaint's procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

The panel will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

### Order of panel hearing

- Welcome and introduction by Chair of the panel;
- Confirmation of the procedure to be followed;
- Complainant, or their accompanying person, presents the appeal;
- Questions to complainant may be asked by the panel and the investigator;
- Any witnesses for the complainant are then called to give their evidence. Questions may be asked of any witnesses, as they appear, by the panel and the investigator;
- The investigator responds to the complaint;
- Questions to the investigator may be asked by the complainant and the panel;
- Witnesses may be called by the investigator to give their evidence. Questions may be asked of any witnesses, as they appear, by the panel and the complainant;
- At the end of these stages, no further evidence can be offered;
- Summing up by the investigator of the evidence presented;
- Concluding remarks by the Chair of the appeal panel. Explanation of what happens next by the Chair of the panel;
- The complainant, the investigator and any other attendees are asked to leave, and the panel deliberates. Only the outcome and reasons to be given in the letter to the complainant are recorded by the clerk, and not the deliberations prior to reaching a decision;
- At any point during the proceedings, the Chair may agree to an adjournment, subject to the proviso that it does not cause an unreasonable delay.

The panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented at the hearing. They can decide to:



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- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the panel will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

### Outcome and response

The Chair of the panel will provide the complainant and school, as well as any other individual named as part of the complaint, with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within ten school days. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises.

The panel will also inform the Trust of the outcome; recommendations may be part of this information.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by VIAT.

### Records

A written record will be kept of all complaints. This information will include:

- whether they are resolved following a formal procedure (Stage 1), or proceed to a panel hearing (Stage 2);
- action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

The school will ensure that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

### Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints' procedure, or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the nature of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the Valley Invicta Academies Trust. They will consider whether VIAT has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus), by telephone on: 0370 000 2288, or by writing to:

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Department for Education  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible;
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- ask for assistance as needed;
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect;
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

#### Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
  - consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and complaints co-ordinator\*, as appropriate, to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting;
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal;
- be mindful of the timescales to respond;
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Head Teacher or complaints panel that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The Head Teacher or complaints panel will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

**\*Complaints co-ordinator** (this could be the Head Teacher / designated trustee or governor / other staff member providing administrative support)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;

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- liaise with staff members, Head Teacher, Chair of the Local School Board, Trust Clerk (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure;
- be aware of issues regarding:
  - sharing third party information
  - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

### **Trust Governance Lead/Clerk or Local School Board administrator**

The Trust Governance Lead/Clerk or Local School Board administrator is the contact point for the complainant and the panel and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR);
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale;
- record the proceedings;
- circulate the minutes of the meeting;
- notify all parties of the panel's decision.

### **Panel Chair**

The panel's Chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via The Trust Governance Lead/Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting;
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy;
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person;
- the remit of the panel is explained to the complainant;
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR;
- If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting;
- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself;
- the issues are addressed;
- key findings of fact are made;
- the panel is open-minded and acts independently;
- no member of the panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;

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- the meeting is minuted;
- they liaise with The Trust Governance Lead/Clerk.

### Panel Member

Panel members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial;  
*No Trustee or governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.*
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant;  
*We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.*
- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting;  
*Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.*
- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting;  
*Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.  
The panel should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.  
If the child/young person is the complainant, the panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.  
However, the parent/carer should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.*
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

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### Appendix 1 - Complaint Form

Please complete and return to The Trust Governance Lead/Clerk who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Pupil's school:</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b>
<b>Day time telephone number:</b> <b>Evening telephone number:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.</b>



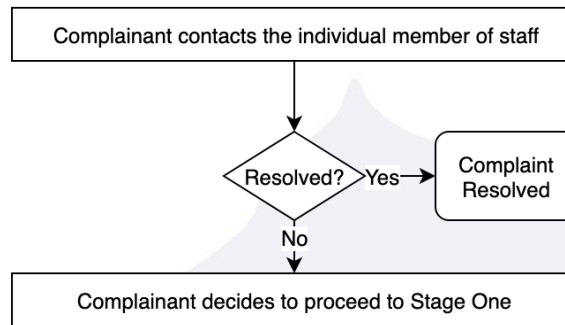
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<b>What actions do you believe will resolve the problem at this stage?</b>
<b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.</b>
<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Official use</b>
<b>Date acknowledgement sent:</b>
<b>By who:</b>
<b>Complaint referred to:</b>
<b>Date:</b>

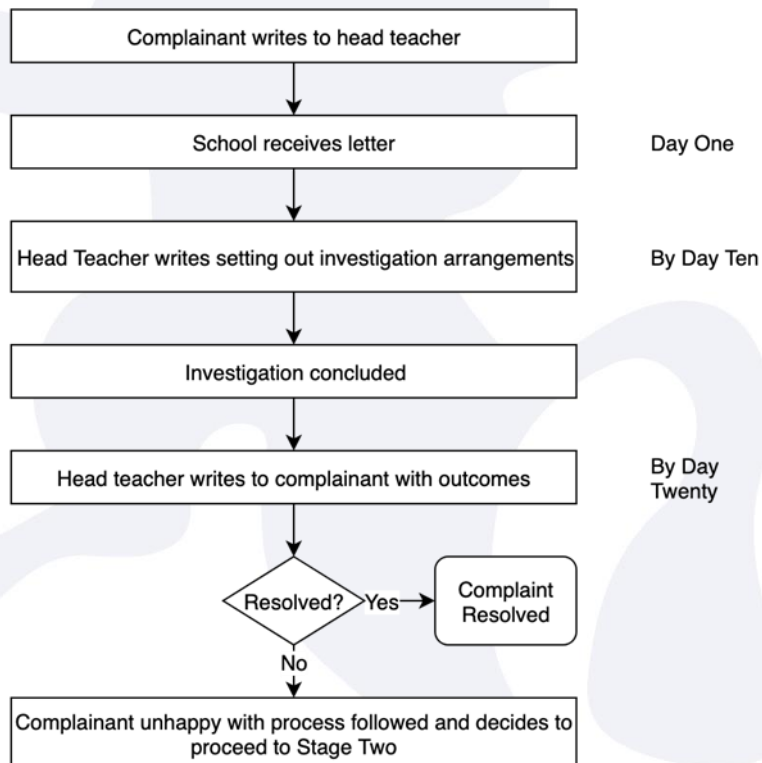
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### Appendix 2 - Complaints Procedure and Timescales Flowchart

#### Informal Stage

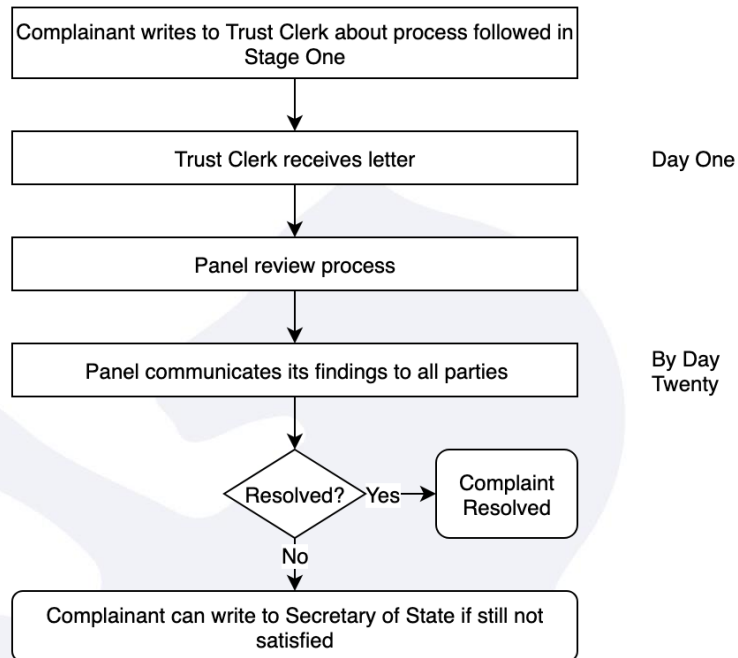


#### Stage One - Formal Stage



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### Stage Two - Trustees' Complaints Panel



**Note:** If the complaint is about the actions of the Head Teacher then the Chair of the Local School Board carries out the Head Teacher's role as indicated above.



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### **Appendix 3 - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE HANDLING UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT, HARASSING OR ABUSIVE COMPLAINANTS**

The Head Teacher and the Trust are committed to the improvement of our schools. We welcome feedback from parents/carers and will always try to resolve any concerns as quickly as possible. There is a procedure for parents to use if they wish to make a formal complaint.

Sometimes, however, parents or carers pursuing complaints or other issues treat staff and others in a way that is unacceptable. Whilst we recognise that some complaints may relate to serious and distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening or harassing behaviour.

This information is to provide information about our school policy on unreasonably persistent complainants or harassment of staff.

#### **What do we mean by 'an unreasonably persistent complainant'?**

An unreasonably persistent complainant may be anyone who engages in unreasonable behaviour when making a complaint. This will include parents and carers who pursue complaints in an unreasonable manner.

Unreasonable behaviour may include:

- actions which are
  - out of proportion to the nature of the complaint
  - persistent – even when the complaints procedure has been exhausted
  - personally harassing
  - unjustifiably repetitious,
- an insistence on
  - pursuing unjustified complaints
  - unrealistic outcomes to justified complaints
  - pursuing justifiable complaints in an unreasonable manner (e.g. using abusive or threatening language
  - making complaints in public
  - refusing to attend appointments to discuss the complaint.

#### **What is 'harassment'?**

We regard harassment as the unreasonable pursuit of issues or complaints, particularly if the matter appears to be pursued in a way intended to cause personal distress rather than seek a resolution.

Behaviour will fall within the scope of this policy if:

- it appears to be deliberately targeted over a significant period of time at one or more members of school staff or others, without good cause;
- the way in which a complaint or other issues is pursued (as opposed to the complaint itself)
- causes ongoing distress to school staff or others
- it has a significant and disproportionate adverse effect on the school community, interfering with the daily business of the education of students.

#### **What can you expect from the school?**

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Anyone who raises informal or formal concerns and complaints with the school can expect us to:

- keep in touch regularly in writing over
- how and when problems can be raised with the school
- respond within a reasonable time
- be available for consultation within a reasonable time limit, bearing in mind the needs of students
- respond with courtesy and respect
- attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means in line with the school's complaints' procedure
- keep those involved informed of progress.

This information forms part of the school's complaints procedure, available on request from the School Office.

### What the school expects of you

The school expects anyone who wishes to raise concerns with the school to:

- treat all staff with courtesy and respect
- respect the needs of pupils and staff within the school
- avoid the use of violence (including threats of violence) towards people or property
- recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond to a complaint
- recognise that some problems may not be resolved in a short time.

### Schools' responses to unreasonably persistent complaints or harassment

In cases of unreasonably persistent complaints or harassment, the school may take the following steps, as appropriate:

- inform the complainant informally that his/her behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable or unacceptable, and request a changed approach
- require all future meetings with a member of staff to be conducted with a second person present. In the interests of all parties, notes of these meetings may be taken
- inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, the school will respond only to written communication.

The school has a duty of care to staff and pupils and will take emergency measures should these become necessary in extreme cases.

### Physical or verbal aggression

The school will not tolerate **any** form of physical or verbal aggression against school staff. If staff are subject to this type of aggression the school may:

- ban the individual from entering the school site, with immediate effect
- prosecute under Anti-Harassment legislation. Legitimate new complaints will always be considered. The school reserves the right not to respond to communications from individuals, subject to the policy.



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